

Congresswoman

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District

Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



Federal Contracts Not Flowing to NY Small Business

As Ranking Democratic Member of the House Small Business Committee, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined her Democratic colleagues and small business owners to release the findings of the fourth annual Scorecard report. The report evaluates 21 agencies on their mandated small business goal achievement.

"We all know the economy is hurting right now. Many companies are buying less, laying off workers, and trying to cut costs," said Congresswoman Velázquez. "But the federal government isn't. In fact, from 2001 to 2002, federal procurement dollars rose 7 percent, from \$220 billion to \$235.4 billion, yet small business opportunities declined. Even though the government bought more last year, it still failed to meet a single one of its small business goals for the third straight year."

In 2002 New York City received \$643 million contracting dollars and small businesses received only \$91 million, or just 14 percent. According to the 1997 census data (the most recent), New York City was the number one location for women-owned businesses and yet in 2002, New York state ranked 12th in federal contract dollars to women-owned businesses. New York state ranked 3rd in the number of minority businesses and yet in 2002, it ranked 16th in federal contract dollars to minority-owned businesses.

The government missed its statutory small business goal of 23 percent and its 5 percent goals for both women-and minority-owned businesses. This failure cost small businesses an estimated \$13.8 billion in federal contracting opportunities. The grades are also the worst they have ever been – out of the 21 agencies examined, there were no A's, 4 B's, 5 C's, 9 D's and 3 F's. The overall grade given to the federal government in Scorecard IV was a D.

The release of Scorecard IV comes more than a year after President Bush promised to take steps to fix the broken procurement system in his small business agenda. Given the results of Scorecard IV, the Bush plan has failed



Congresswoman Velázquez and colleagues speak out about federal contracting and small business.

to give small businesses more opportunities in the federal procurement arena.

"This move is typical of an administration that has said one thing and done another," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "When the president had the chance to live up to his rhetoric during the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, rather than ensure that strong protections for small businesses were in place, the administration removed them. Then it relaxed current procurement policies, making it even less likely that small businesses will get equitable treatment."

"Small businesses just need a chance – a foot in the door so they can show federal agencies what they can do. After all, small businesses make up the majority of all businesses right here in New York City. They are the lifeline of the American economy. Now we just need the federal government to figure it out."

\$630,000 for Affordable Housing Grants

Federal funding in the amount of \$630,000 was awarded to the Housing Works, Inc. and the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council (RBSCC) from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. The money will go towards providing affordable housing for very low-income families, homeless single women and people living with HIV/AIDS.

"Housing Works and the Ridgewood-Bushwick Senior Citizens Council have done work in our community to provide housing for low-income families and individuals," said Congresswoman Velázquez. "By working to reduce homelessness, delivering services to those in need and housing to low-income families, these organizations are improving the quality of life for residents in our neighborhoods. This funding will allow Housing Works and RBSCC to continue providing affordable opportunities and services to those who need them most."

Out of the \$630,000, \$430,000 will go towards funding for a RBSCC housing project entitled West

Bushwick Third Party Transfer. This project will renovate 43 apartment units located in nine buildings scattered throughout Bushwick that house very low-income families. It will be used to modernize the layouts, bring the apartments up to code and create larger apartments that better accommodate families.

RBSCC is a service provider in the Ridgewood and Bushwick communities, offering a vast array of social services to residents of all ages.

Housing Works, Inc. will receive the other \$200,000 in funding for its Women's Transitional Housing Program. The project will provide 20 units of transitional housing and supportive services to very low-income individuals, homeless single women and people living with HIV/AIDS. A three-story property will be converted into studio apartments and case management and social services will be provided on-site.

Housing Works, Inc. is a minority-controlled, community-based, not-for-profit corporation providing housing, health care and support services to homeless New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS.

Williamsburg Bridge 100th Anniversary Celebration

An all-afternoon celebration at Continental Army Plaza Park took place to mark the 100th anniversary of the Williamsburg Bridge. Congresswoman Velázquez was among the speakers at the event.

“This once in a life time event is special and I am honored to be a part of it,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “Imagine what it must have been like to live in one of the tenements on the Lower East Side or a wooden house in Williamsburg, and see the bridge going up and wondering what it would bring. This bridge lead us to a new urban suburb called Williamsburg that has provided citizens and immigrants from all over with opportunity! This is a true milestone in our local history!”

The celebration included a giant cake in the shape of a bridge, a procession across the bridge, traditional music by various ethnic groups and walking tours. The event was coordinated by the Brooklyn Arts Council.

“Today is a celebration of cultural diversity and community unity,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “The Williamsburg bridge is the anchor and the gateway to opportunity in the heart of our community. Let’s all wish Willie B another 100 years of service.”



Congresswoman Velázquez speaks to a crowd at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Williamsburg Bridge.

Child Care Funding Needs to be a Priority

Federal funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the principal federal program supporting child care services for low-income families in the 2004 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill was requested by Rep. Velázquez. She asked that an additional \$11.25 billion in funding per year over 5 years be provided for the grant.

“The President’s 2004 budget request for CCDBG is inadequate and does not address the difficulty meeting the demands for child care,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “One of the keys to helping low-income parents find and sustain employment is access to adequate child care. This funding would ensure that families transitioning from welfare to work have the services they need in order to become self-sufficient.”

Recent data has indicated that one-third of the states have waiting lists for child care, some with over 200,000 children on the list. Approximately 2.2 million of the nearly

16 million eligible children are receiving assistance – this represents only one in seven children. The situation is predicted to only get worse as more and more states face budget crises.

“Investing in child care is cost effective and saves taxpayers approximately \$7 for every \$1 spent by reducing school dropout rates, welfare dependency, criminal activity and juvenile delinquency,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “It is critical that we address the need for this grant in order to satisfy the needs for families seeking child care assistance.”

Funding for set-asides for CCDBG programs were also requested, including \$100 million for infant and toddler care, \$10 million for research, \$1 million for Child Care Aware, a national resource and referral line/Web site that helps families find child care, \$19 million for school-age care and \$173 million for quality assurance.

Velázquez Fights Cuts to Federal Voc-ed Programs

Congresswoman Velázquez called on Congress to restore federal funding for career and technical education, cut by \$333 million in the Bush administration’s 2004 budget.

“Career and technical education programs help students learn and apply the academic and high-level technical skills needed in today’s workforce,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “These programs are also a key factor in strengthening the nation’s economic competitiveness in the global and technological marketplace.”

Acknowledging the importance of federal investment in career and technical education, Congresswoman Velázquez moved to protect initiatives to integrate academic and technical coursework, provide for career guidance to help students explore postsecondary opportunities, and Tech Prep, a series

of local consortia that link secondary and postsecondary career programs.

“As an integral component of the total education mission, career technical education contributes to the goals of high student achievement, student retention, and motivation to graduate,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “We know that students perform better and stay in school when they believe their coursework is relevant to their future endeavors, and career and technical education provides this connection.”

These federal voc-ed programs fall under the Perkins Act and help students experience a “seamless” transition into meaningful postsecondary experiences, including apprenticeships, training programs, technical and community colleges, and four-year higher education institutions.

Grants Awarded to Our Community

The New York Community Trust

- *Maura Clark-Ita Ford Center \$35,000
To help provide employment and financial assistance.
- *Neighbors Against Garbage \$40,000
To conduct a census, documentation and identification of geographic advantages for specific industry groups.

U.S. Department of Labor

- *Black Veterans for Social Justice \$250,000
To expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force.

Universal Service Administrative Company - Schools and Libraries Division

- *Mount Carmel Academy \$2,400
For telecommunication services.

- *St. Stanislaus Kostka School
For Internet access \$5,280
For telecommunication services \$8,223.08
- *St. Vincent de Paul School
For telecommunication services \$1,158.05
- *Talmud Torah of Kasho \$41,526
For telecommunication services
- *Beikvei Hatzoin
For internal connections \$54,551.70
For telecommunication services \$21,609.40
- *Mesivta Nachlas Yakov School \$17,730.00
For telecommunication services
- *Mesivta Tifereth Zvi Spinka \$29,655.83
For telecommunication services
- *Mesivta Nachlas Yakov School
For Internet access \$13,015.62
For telecommunication services \$34,843.93